



USAID | CAMBODIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, USAID/Cambodia has made significant contributions towards improving health care in Cambodia. Working with the Ministry of Health (MoH), as well as a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other donors, USAID/Cambodia has heavily invested in the Cambodian health sector and remains dedicated to its goal of strengthening health systems and improving the health status of Cambodian people.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

IMPROVED CHILD SURVIVAL, HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Reducing child mortality is a major challenge. More than 50,000 children under the age of five die in Cambodia each year. Infant mortality rates are 95/1000, four times higher than in neighboring Vietnam or Thailand.

Most of these deaths are preventable. Yet without focused interventions, this rate is likely to increase—especially among children under the age of one.

High level visits organized in 2004 by the Global Partnership for Child Survival (representing USAID, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank, among other donors) focused attention on child health issues. This was the catalyst for Cambodia's first National Child Survival Conference.

The conference underscored the importance for more coordinated and streamlined approaches toward implementing high impact child survival interventions in Cambodia.

USAID-funded initiatives are having an impact. For example, in USAID-supported pilot districts, 85 percent of the children between the ages of 6-59 months receive Vitamin A. Our goal is to assist the MoH to achieve 100 percent coverage in all districts.

Likewise, total immunization rates for children between the ages of 12-23 months are as high as 81 percent, depending on the area. Such successful pilot interventions are now ready to be scaled-up to have national impact.

REDUCE TRANSMISSION & IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS

Despite a significant decline in HIV/AIDS prevalence rates (from 3.0 percent in 1997 to 1.9 percent in 2005), Cambodia proportionately faces the most serious HIV/AIDS problem in Asia.

Approximately 130,000 Cambodians are HIV/AIDS positive and more than 60,000 of them are women. Some 16,000-20,000 Cambodians die from complications related to HIV/AIDS each year. The number of HIV/AIDS orphans in Cambodia is estimated at more than 50,000.

The decline in Cambodia's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is a major achievement and is partly attributable to targeted interventions by USAID and other donors. For example, HIV peer education and prevention programs to the Cambodian military now provide 100 percent coverage, with 85 percent of this coverage directly supported by USAID.

A similar HIV peer education and prevention program funded by USAID reaches over 50 percent of the country's police officers. USAID also supports HIV/AIDS prevention programs and sexually transmitted disease (STD) treatment among prostitutes in 14 out of Cambodia's 24 provinces. Data from the Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS) for 2004 indicates that the very high rates of condom use among the military, police and prostitutes are being maintained.

Cambodia is one of few countries in the region that has a law on HIV/AIDS that protects the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. The law also aims to reduce stigma and discrimination. With USAID support to the National AIDS Authority, progress has been made towards making this law operational.

USAID also supports the "Cambodia Positive People Network". The Network is focused on people with HIV/AIDS as well as the communities in which they live. For example, Buddhist monks, already leaders in many Cambodian communities, are assisted in their efforts to provide compassion to people living with HIV/AIDS. Again, the intent is to reduce stigma and discrimination.



HEALTH



PREVENT & CONTROL MAJOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Approximately, two-thirds of all Cambodians carry the tuberculosis bacterium, one of the highest rates in the world. Some 10,000 Cambodians die annually from tuberculosis. While malaria mortality rates have been halved since 1999, it is still a major killer, especially amongst children.

Latent threats such as SARS or Avian Flu could emerge unexpectedly and with potentially devastating consequences, further underscoring the importance of supporting a strong public health system in Cambodia.

Pilot USAID interventions related to tuberculosis have achieved impressive results. For example, USAID partners expanded the reach of community Directly Observed Treatment Short Courses (DOTS) from three to ten operating districts. Within these districts, reported detection rates are as high as 82 percent. Treatment completion rates are similarly impressive, ranging from 90 to 100 percent.

Top priorities for the TB program are now to raise the detection rate for smear-positive pulmonary TB to 70 percent by 2005; maintain or improve the current cure rate of 85 percent; and expand the DOTS program to cope with a rising incidence prompted by HIV co-infection.

Prevention is an important aspect of any malaria control program. USAID supports bednet distribution and re-impregnation, as well as early diagnosis and treatment, including monitoring anti-malaria drug resistance. Hundreds of village health volunteers have been trained to provide community outreach, distribute bednets and educate villagers on the importance of bednets.

Decreasing the gaps between knowledge and practice plays a major role in improving health

IMPROVED HEALTHY REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

Maternal mortality rates in Cambodia rank amongst the highest in South East Asia, resulting in more than 1,500 deaths each year. More appropriate birth spacing would improve the health status of mothers as well as children.

Cambodia's current fertility rate stands at four, with modern contraceptive prevalence estimated at only 19 percent. Here again, USAID programs are making a difference. For example, the number of midwives that were trained in Life Saving Skills reached 508 in 2004, up from 322 in 2002. Midwives receiving training have come from 19 out of Cambodia's 24 provinces. Perhaps more significantly, the Life Saving Skills approach (funded by USAID) has been recognized by the Ministry of Health as the best in the country and will be adopted in national training programs for midwives across Cambodia.

USAID partners also contributed toward a significant increase in contraceptive usage. The total couple years of contraceptive protection provided by USAID partners is now at almost 400,000, an increase of 21 percent since 2001. In addition, the number of condoms sold in 2004 through social marketing, community-based distribution, outreach workers and health facilities exceeded 22.7 million in 2004, an increase of 30 percent since 2001.

USAID's health portfolio for Cambodia will continue to evolve and respond to the needs of the people. USAID's bilateral agreement with the Ministry of Health reinforces our commitment towards health systems strengthening and public health initiatives. We pride ourselves on developing and investing in evidenced-based programs that respect traditional values, and at the same time, provide the best scientific data available.

USAID-FUNDED PARTNERS IN CAMBODIA

USAID funds a number of health partners in Cambodia. These include the following organization:

- Family Health International (FHI)
- University Research Corporation (URC),
- CARE
- Reproductive and Child Health Alliance (RACHA),
- Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC)
- Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA) -Partners for Development (PFD)
- Population Services International (PSI)
- POLICY Project
- Helen Keller
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- World Vision

OTHER USAID-FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

WHO; UNICEF; US-CDC; World Relief; Adventist Development and Relief Agency; American Red Cross; Conservation International

